

L.E.N.S.

Monthly publication of the
Lake Erie N Scale Society



N-TRAK
N SCALE MODULAR RAILROADING

August, 2004

Welcome!

LENS is a group of people with a common interest in modeling N scale railroads using the "NTRAK" modular concept.

Any time we meet and/or display our work and promote this hobby, we would love to have you join us.

This means that ALL of us have chances to participate in the hobby by helping with any or all of the following:

Setting up/tearing down
Running trains
Sharing your knowledge
Learning something new
Answering questions
Hosting a meeting

Notice that NONE of the above requires a module. We need your help... so bring yourself, your enthusiasm, your interest and your trains.

Thanks in advance for helping! Hopefully, we will continue to see you at the meetings and display events.

Come and join in the fun!

www.geocities.com/lensohio/

The Lake Erie N Scale Society newsletter is published monthly for the sole use of its members by a crew of volunteers.

Opinions published here are solely those of the editor and/or the members of the Lake Erie N Scale Society.

This publication is intended to be a monthly newsletter describing the business, events and the common interest in N scale model railroading enjoyed by the members of the Lake Erie N Scale Society.

For information or questions regarding our Society, you may contact Dennis Lloyd at 440-352-7081 - or - (dlloyd@apk.net)

Meetings normally start at 8:00 p.m., the fourth Friday of each month.

Lake Erie N Scale Society

August, 2004

Module Certification—A Lesson Learned

The members of the Northern VA N-trak group, sponsored the N Scale East 2004 convention this month in Chantilly VA.

In order to enter a module in the “World’s Largest Layout”, each module had to pass a rigorous set of standards, have a certification form filled out and signed and finally have a sticker applied to indicate it was “show ready”.

Bob V., Matt K. & Lou D. decided to perform the task one Saturday night, thinking it would be a fairly straightforward process, as our modules had been used before in multiple shows. Eleven modules were tested, but only one passed!

After working until past midnight, we agreed to meet again on Sunday; the task was finally completed late Sunday night. What a surprise! Here is what we learned...

It was discovered the biggest problem we had was the wiring. Most of the current going from west to east along the modules had been carried by the track. The plugs that go from module to module were so badly corroded, they didn’t pass current until scrubbed by a wire wheel. In addition, we found a couple of wires that were not very solid, one crossed wire and a dead spot after a switch.

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Last Month's Meeting

Skip G. opened his home to this "motley crew". of model railroaders.

We continued the discussion regarding the "liability issue" , with nothing more decided.

The logo shirts, etc were delivered and most were distributed at this meeting. (Note: Since this meeting, we are now working with a new vendor who is providing better quality and faster service. There are also additional items with some lower prices in addition to the items already offered in the past.

As you see, the newsletter is now being distributed via the Internet with an e-mail notice. We are still supplying 5 paper copies—a vast reduction in the cost to provide this publication. We discovered some remaining, minor "bugs" that should be eliminated by the time you receive this issue. Please advise the editor of any problem you experience.

It was determined the club members who were going to attend the convention (who also were bringing modules), needed to complete the "certification" process required by the Northern VA N-trak club that was sponsoring the event.

Free to a good home.

I am cleaning house and have two cases of Individual plastic boxes (originally from freight cars) that must find a new home. Contact Dennis Lloyd if you are interested.
(lensohio@yahoo.com)

This Month's Meeting

Traditionally, we have not had a meeting in the month of August. Instead, John and Sally Evans open their patio for a social gathering. It is a chance for our members to bring a guest and meet with other members in a different setting (although we still talk about trains and stuff). There should be plenty of stories told regarding the “World’s Largest N-trak Layout” seen at the Capitol Limited 2004 convention!

NOTE CHANGE OF TIME: *the picnic will be held on the fourth SATURDAY of the month starting at 6:00 p.m.*

Bring a folding chair, a table setting, your favorite item for the grill, a dish to share and a beverage.

It gets cold there after the sun goes down— so don't forget a jacket or sweatshirt if you hang around for conversation after dinner.

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the web version
for security
purposes

Report from Chantilly

Here is what was announced as future releases, at the Manufactures' Breakfast held Sunday morning at the recent N Scale East 2004 convention:

N Scale Architect:

- 3 journeyman kits
- Altoona Coal Retailer
- DLW Station
- Several Multi-Structure kits

Richmond:

- White Surface Mount LEDs

LBF:

- N scale is now 60% of their business. New items monthly.

Micro-Trains:

- Tri-level Enclosed Auto Racks
- Dalman Trucks
- Ortner 2 bay hopper

Deluxe Innovations:

- 40 ft HiCube Containers
- Tractor/Trailers
- Maxi III Stack Car
- 53 ft Spine Cars (with GHQ)

Atlas:

- Code 55 22.5° and 45° crossings, longer turnouts

InterMountain:

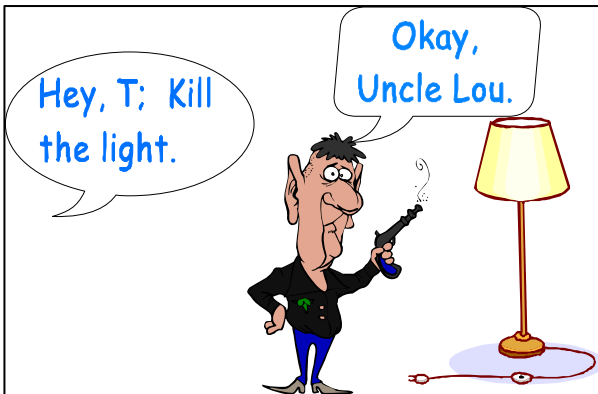
Tunnel Motors
CP Coal Gons
60 ft flat car
UP Caboose
Sound System
33 in and 36 in metal wheel sets

Neil's Ngauging Trains:

Signals
1950 tractor/trailer
Hearse
Ambulance
DPM windows
Special Run Containers

Athern:

Seico Box Cars
SD70M (3 more diesels coming)



N-trak convention roommates Denny, Lou & Anthony, getting ready for bed late one night.

Next Month's Meeting

Bonnie and Clyde (wait, that's been done already)...

Wayne and Bonnie L. have offered to host the September meeting at their home in Geauga county.

Although they have recently joined our group (they didn't know any better), I understand they have both been involved in the model railroading hobby for many years, albeit in the **H**orribly **O**versized scale.

We will be discussing where the next setup may be, what programs we will be involved in as we go forward, and your thoughts on certification as it relates to our modules.

The program for this meeting will be announced at the October meeting. (Can you tell that Denny is here, and helping with this Newsletter?)

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What we found would explain some of the weird electrical problems we have experienced in the last few set ups. As a result of our findings, we are recommending that we perform a scaled down certification (mostly electrical) before setting up any module that has been in storage. This will make for an interesting subject at a future meeting.

Now the sad news. Once we got to Chantilly, the certifications were not collected, nor were modules that were not certified, challenged. At the set up / operations meeting, the organizers stated they would flag and monitor any module that had no certification or was causing trouble. To my knowledge, that wasn't done either. However, they made their point. Over 500 modules came together and ran just wonderfully!

In my opinion, they should have carried through on what they started, because now, many people will not attempt to certify before shows thinking, "nothing will be done anyhow".

As stated earlier, the process was very detailed and complex. However, it pointed out the fact that our modules were "in trouble" and we didn't know it. In the future, we must consider some form of certification, in order to guarantee smooth operating. Since we are showing for the public, it behooves us to make sure our layouts are in "top notch" condition prior to show time.

Our "Annual Swap Meet", is now available at every meeting!

If you have surplus engines, buildings, rolling stock, modules, etc., bring them to any of the meetings to offer great deals to your fellow members.

“web.page”

Let's look at a web page that has made the Model Railroader Top 10 list 2 years in a row. It is George Ellwood's Fallen Flags at:

www.rr-fallenflags.org

Don't be misled by the title. This site contains photos from the early 1900's until the present. Obviously, current railroads are not fallen flags, so the title is not as restrictive as it seems. This site has grown to where George needed to move it from a free site to a paid site. Many users, including myself, annually make a donation to keep the site going.

In addition to photos of engines and cars, you will find shots of right-of-way, and documents such as engine manuals and site plans.

Beginners' "Electrical" Project



This photograph from the site (*previous page*), is an example. It shows a former UP right-of-way with the track removed but the signal still in place. This would be an easy scene to duplicate. Since there is no track, the signals are dark. Therefore, insert LEDs or small bulbs of your choice. There is no wiring to do, since the signals are dark. No chance of a short circuit.

Here are 2 other photos to give you an idea of the range of material that is available:



People are starting to post their pictures from the N Scale East 2004 convention, onto the Internet. Here are three sites that I knew of at the time of publication:

[http://community.webshots.com/user/atsf arizona](http://community.webshots.com/user/atsf%20arizona) at chantilly
[http://community.webshots.com/user/atsf arizona layout tours](http://community.webshots.com/user/atsf%20arizona%20layout%20tours)
<http://www.ntrak2004.org> (click on "Galleries")

Visit our web site at www.geocities.com/lensohio/

“F.R.E.D.”



See you at the next convention!

This group represents the first contingent of Japanese “N-trakers” to bring and connect modules to the US standard. Japan, Australia & other countries use the metric standard, which is slightly different than ours. Even with a language barrier, we easily shared our interest in model trains.

We have all been invited to bring our modules to Tokyo.

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